

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gibson County Training School
other names/site number Polk-Clark School; Polk-Clark High School

2. Location

street & number 1041 S. Harris Street NA ☐ not for publication
city or town Milan NA ☐ vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Gibson code 053 zip code 38358

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

sites

0

4

structures

objects

1

4

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick; concrete

walls Brick

Concrete

roof Asphalt

other Metal, glass, wood, concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HISTORY: African American

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1926-63

Significant Dates

1926-opening of Rosenwald School; c. 1942, c. 1951, c. 1953, c. 1955, c. 1958, pre-1961-additions of classroom wings;

c. 1951-gymnasium addition; c. 1963-transfer of ownership from Gibson County to City of Milan

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Creswell Brothers, contractors

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Gibson County Training School
Name of Property

Gibson County Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15.5 acres Milan, Tenn. 437 NE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	340203	3976037
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	340698	3976033

3	16	340601	3975702
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	16	340220	3975699

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle (Faculty), Leigh Ann Gardner (MA Student), Dr. Carroll Van West (Director), Elizabeth Humphreys (Projects Coordinator)

organization Center for Historic Preservation date January 2012

street & number Middle Tennessee State University, Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Gibson County Training School Polk-Clark High School Alumni Association, Inc. c/o Janice Williams

street & number P.O. Box 734 telephone 731-723-3577

city or town Milan state TN zip code 38358

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Gibson County Training School (GCTS), now commonly known as the Polk-Clark School, is located in Milan, TN, (pop. 7,928) in Gibson County. The school is located on Harris Street and is surrounded by railroad tracks, churches, and homes. The GCTS was first constructed c. 1926 as a Rosenwald School, and later additions were added c. 1942, 1953, 1955, pre-1961, 1964, and 1967. The building is sited on the northern half of the parcel. It is an unusually large school site with the parcel consisting of 15.5 acres. The main entrance to the school is from West Jackson Street, facing east. Noncontributing basketball courts are located to the northeast of the school site, and there are two noncontributing playgrounds on the site. One noncontributing playground is located to the east of the school, and an older noncontributing playground is located south of the school. Shrubberies in the shape of the letters "P C" are located in front of the north wing of the east elevation. The interior of the building is in various states of repair. A portion of the building is currently in use providing before and after school care for students for the local school system while some of the building remains empty.

1. Gibson County Training School (c. 1926-1927; additions c. 1928, c. 1942, 1953, c. 1951, 1955, c. 1958, pre-1961, 1964, 1967, contributing building)

The building is a one-story brick building with an asphalt shingle roof. The school began as six-teacher school, but followed the plan of a five-teacher Rosenwald School, Nashville Plan: East or West Facing (see Figure 1). The various additions to the structure depict trends seen across the south as local white school boards sought to stave off integration with an attempt of "separate but equal" facilities for white and black children. The building in its current form contains multiple rooflines, from gable to flat, depending on the addition. The foundation is brick. A number of separate wings comprise the building, including the main wing, a center projecting wing, a gymnasium addition wing, and a southeast projecting wing.

EXTERIOR

The east facade contains a center projecting center wing (c. 1955), a north wing (c. 1942, c. 1953, pre-1961), a south wing (c. 1942, c. 1958), and a southeast projecting elementary school wing (c. 1967). The projecting center wing on the east facade was built in 1955. It has a concrete stairway leading to a covered porch with double doors. The double doors were glass with a one-light transom but the glass elements are now boarded up. The doorway is arched brick. All windows in this section appear to be original to the time of construction. There are two bays of paired five-light metal hopper windows, with the bottom two lights both opening on a hinge.

The south side of the projecting center wing contains a bay of four paired five-light metal hopper windows. One of these windows has been replaced with a one-over-one double-hung metal window and an air conditioning unit has been placed in one of the windows. There are two single two-over-one double-hung metal windows on the westernmost end where the projecting center wing adjoins the south wing. The westernmost bay of the projecting center wing contains a recessed entry with concrete steps leading up to a set of double metal doors. The doors have two-light windows, and a two-light transom tops the surround. All but one of the windows appears to be original. The ceiling of the recessed porch is wood.

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The north side of the projecting center wing contains six bays of paired five-light metal hopper windows. The outer two windows have been replaced by one-over-one metal double-hung windows. Storm windows cover the windows and two window air conditioning units have been added to these windows. A single two-light fixed window is located toward the western end of projecting wing. The projecting center wing adjoins the north wing of the east elevation at a covered porch with a recessed entry in the westernmost bay of the projecting wing. The steps to the metal single door are concrete, and the ceiling of the porch is wood. The one-over-two window on the metal door has bars covering it. The transom over the door has been boarded with wood. All but two windows appear to be original. Beneath the foundation of this section, the steps of the original entrance to the original Rosenwald building can still be seen.

The east façade of the north wing was built over a number of years. A portion of the original roofline of the Rosenwald school is still visible in the attic of this section. The façade of the north classroom wing contains one classroom bay of the original Rosenwald core with a set of three original nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. A window air conditioner has been added to one of these windows. One classroom bay north of the Rosenwald core was added c. 1942 and originally contained three sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. The outer sets of windows remain intact, while one of the windows in the central set has been replaced by a wood door. A metal ramp leads up to the door. Around 1953, two more classroom bays were added north of the c. 1942 bay. A stepped parapet divides the c. 1942 bay and the c. 1953 bays. At the outer ends of each of these classroom bays are two narrow one-over-one double-hung windows. The central portions of these bays each contain three sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. One more classroom bay was added at the northern end of the wing at an unknown date, but was present by 1961. This bay is slightly lower in height and stylistically more modern. Two two-over-one double-hung metal windows are at the southern end of this classroom bay. At the center of the bay is a set of six five-light metal hopper windows. One of these windows has been replaced by a one-over-one synthetic double-hung window. A window air conditioning unit has been added to these windows. All but two windows in this elevation appear to be original to time of construction. All windows on this elevation have concrete sills.

The north elevation of the pre-1961 north wing contains a recessed entry with a set of double metal doors. A two-light window is in each door and a four-light transom tops the entrance. A rectangular metal vent is at the top of the gable field.

The south wing of the east elevation was built over a number of years. Much of it mirrors the north wing of the building with one classroom bay of the original Rosenwald core, one bay constructed c. 1942, and two bays constructed c. 1958. An entrance bay connects the south wing to the southeast projecting wing at the southernmost end of this section. The Rosenwald bay, like the north wing, contains a set of three nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. The c. 1942 classroom bay contains three sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. A shop was once located south of this bay, but was replaced c. 1958. Like the north wing, a stepped brick parapet separates the c. 1942 bay from the next addition. Circa 1958, two classroom bays were added to the south side of the parapet. The northernmost c. 1958 bay contains five sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. One of these bays has a window air conditioning unit installed. The southernmost bay contains three sets of paired six-over-six double-hung wood windows. All windows on this elevation appear to be original and have concrete sills.

The c. 1967 addition obscures the south elevation of the south wing.

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The rear, or west, elevation of the building shows the most intact section of the original Rosenwald plan with a projecting auditorium flanked by single classroom bays. The flanking classroom bays, one each on the west elevation of the north and south wings, each contain their original band of six nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. The window bands are a characteristic feature of Rosenwald schools. The bottom sashes of the windows on the north wing have been boarded. On the south wing, one bottom sash has been boarded and a window air conditioning unit has been added in one window. The north wall of the projecting auditorium contains a set of three original nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. The bottom sashes have been boarded. Another set of windows appears to have been bricked in at the center of this elevation. At the western end of this elevation appears to be an original six-over-six double-hung wood window mostly boarded. The south elevation of the projecting auditorium also contains one original set of three windows. One is an original nine-over-nine wood window with an air conditioning unit added. The other two windows have had their bottom sash replaced by a single-light sash. In front of these windows, an original exterior chimney rises from the ground. The central set of windows has been bricked in a replaced with a single metal door. The westernmost window has been boarded. The western elevation of the auditorium wing is obscured by the hyphen to the gymnasium addition. All exposed windows appear to be original and have concrete sills.

The rear, or west, elevation of the north wing follows closely the design of the east facade. North of the Rosenwald classroom bay is the c. 1942 classroom bay with three sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows. One window has been replaced by a single metal door and an air conditioning unit has been added to one of the windows. A stepped brick parapet divides the c. 1942 bay from two c. 1953 classroom bays. Like the facade, the c. 1953 bays mirror one another with two narrow one-over-one double-hung wood windows at the outer ends of the bays and a set of three paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows at the inside of each bay. An air conditioning window unit is in one of these windows. The final addition, constructed by 1961, is lower in height and contains two two-over-one double-hung metal windows at the southern end of this classroom bay and a set of six five-light metal hopper windows at the north end. A window air conditioning unit is in one of the windows. All windows appear to be original and have concrete sills.

The rear, or west, elevation of the south wing contains the original Rosenwald classroom bay, the c. 1942 classroom bay, and the two c. 1958 classroom bays. The c. 1942 classroom bay matches that of the facade with three sets of paired nine-over-nine original double-hung wood windows. A stepped brick parapet divides the c. 1942 and c. 1958 additions. The c. 1958 classrooms bays are different from the facade elevation. On the rear, a single six-over-six double-hung window is at the northernmost end of the addition. Four sets of paired nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows are at the center of this addition. A window air conditioning unit has been placed in one of these windows. A single metal door is located at the southern end of this addition. All windows appear to be original and have concrete sills. The c. 1967 addition to the south end of the school partially obscures the south end of the south wing.

The gymnasium and stage addition was added in 1951; and in 1964, a lobby was added on the south side of the gymnasium. The lobby was also used as the band room. In the late 1960s, a building trades classroom was added on the north end of the gymnasium and a dressing room was added at the southwest corner of the gymnasium.

The gymnasium addition connects to the west elevation of the original Rosenwald auditorium wing with a single-story concrete block hyphen that has a gable roof with asphalt tile and a concrete foundation. A set

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of concrete steps leads to the metal double doors located on the north elevation of the hyphen. Each door contains a two-light window. On the south elevation of the hyphen is another set of concrete steps leading up to double metal doors, this with a small single-light window.

The gymnasium is a concrete block building, two stories tall, with a gable roof. The east elevation of the gymnasium connects to the hyphen and contains five bays of metal awning windows in the second story. The central three window bays are sets of three five-light windows, and the outer window bays are paired five-light windows. Attached to the north end of the gymnasium is a late-1960s building trades classroom, a one-story, flat roof, concrete block structure with a single metal door with a two-light window, and two metal eight-light awning windows on the east elevation. A third window is boarded and painted to match the concrete.

The north elevation of the gymnasium contains a single metal vent in the upper portion of the gable field. The one-story addition contains seven boarded windows painted to match the concrete on the north elevation. Set back from the building trades addition is a small one-story bathroom structure with a single door on the north elevation. The north elevation of the stage is set back further from the gymnasium and has two boarded windows and one boarded door.

The west elevation of the building trades addition has a metal garage door. The west elevation of the two-story gym is mostly interrupted by a projecting two-story, flat-roof stage. A pair of five-light awning windows remains in the upper floor of the gymnasium on either side of the stage. Set back from the stage on the northern end of the gymnasium is a single door. The west elevation of the projecting stage has one boarded window and one eight-light awning window. A basement is visible on the west elevation of the stage and contains eight boarded windows painted to match the concrete. A dressing room was added on the southern end of the stage in the late-1960s and contains two boarded windows and a single metal door.

The south elevation of the gymnasium is mostly obscured by a c. 1964 lobby/band room and the late-1960s dressing room. The south elevation of the dressing room and lobby additions contains six boarded windows, one metal door, and one double door entrance. Above the band room is the gable end of the gymnasium with a metal vent in the upper portion of the south elevation. The eastern elevation of the band room contains a single boarded window.

The southeast projecting brick wing is the newest addition to the building, having been constructed c. 1967, and stylistically represents a simplified modernist style. The wing is set at an angle to the main school structure and extends toward the southeast. The roof is a flat roof and is made of asphalt. The projecting eaves are supported by wood beams. The south wing addition adjoins the original building at a single story bay that contains a six-light metal casement window with two light transom atop. The entrance to this wing is located at the east end of the section, and is characteristic of the modern style of architecture from its time of construction. A set of concrete steps leads to the covered porch. Three hanging glass lights are attached to the porch roof. There are two sets of double glass doors leading into the building. Nine panes of glass of various sizes are found on top of the doors. The east façade of the classroom wing contains ten six-light metal casement windows that are each topped by a two light transom and two six-light metal casement windows with no transom. This section is flanked symmetrically on each end with a single casement window.

The south elevation contains a recessed entry with double metal doors.

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The west elevation of the southeast projecting classroom wing has six pairs of three-light metal casement windows with two-light transoms, a single three-light metal casement window with a two-light transom, two boarded windows, and double metal door with shed roof.

Projecting toward the west from the entrance of the c. 1967 addition is a large gable roof section that adjoins the rear, or west, elevation of the c. 1958 classroom bays. The south elevation of the c. 1967 gabled projection has a single double-door entry. A shed-roof projection is located at the western end of this elevation. Two brick pilasters divide the otherwise blank brick wall. A wood cornice extends along a portion of this elevation.

The western elevation of the c. 1967 addition contains the gable end of the large gabled section. A small window on the northern end of the gable has been boarded. Two brick pilasters divide the otherwise blank brick wall. Also visible on the west elevation are two shed-roof projections on the north side, both with a single window on their west elevation. Additionally, another shed-roof projection is located on the south wall of the gabled projection that also has a single window on the western elevation. Wood rafter tails are exposed on this elevation.

The north elevation of this section has two projecting shed-roof structures. The easternmost projecting section has a partially enclosed porch and a covered entrance with a single wood door. The westernmost projecting section sits farther back and has a blank brick wall.

INTERIOR

The interior of the original Rosenwald school is mostly intact. The hall of the Rosenwald school forms a "T" and is intact with original materials. The entrance hall runs between the lounge and office and another hallway runs north-south dividing two rows of classrooms. On the east side of the classroom hallway are four rooms, two classrooms on the outer ends and a lounge and office flanking the entrance hall. The north side of the hall has been altered slightly. Two classrooms on the outer ends remain intact. The auditorium remains mostly intact, but was converted to use as a library. Two rooms flank the auditorium, consistent with the five-teacher east or west facing Rosenwald plan (see Figure 1). The small furnace room is also on the south side of the auditorium, and a small space on the northern end of the auditorium has been altered to create a hallway into the c. 1951 gymnasium addition.

The original entrance hall of the Rosenwald school now connects to the central hall of the projecting center wing on the east façade. The interior of the projecting center wing contains three classrooms, the principal's office, the lounge, the secretary's office and restrooms. Some classrooms retain chalkboards. The floors are made of tile and the walls are concrete cinder block.

The interior of the north wing contains ten classrooms with two restrooms in six of these rooms. Added onto the north side of the original Rosenwald school are two classrooms, one on either side of the north-south hall, that date to c. 1942. Added north of the c. 1942 addition are four rooms dating to c. 1953, two on either side of the hall. North of these rooms are two rooms dating to pre-1961, one on either side of the hall. There is a metal pull-down fire door in this part of the building that was present on floor plans by 1953. The name of the original maker of the doors is detectable, showing the door as being made by The J.G. Wilson Corporation of New York, New York. Many of the classrooms retain chalkboards and the original

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concrete block walls. Some of the classrooms have suffered damage; at least three classrooms have a ceiling coming down. In one of these rooms, the original wood ceiling is detectable beneath the dropped ceiling. The floors are a mixture of linoleum tile and industrial carpet. Several classrooms have concrete floors as the linoleum has been pulled up.

The south wing contains eight classrooms, a lounge, the library, and the furnace room. Attached to the south end of the original Rosenwald portion of the building are two classrooms dating to c. 1942, one on either side of the north-south hall. On the south end of these rooms are four classrooms dating to c. 1958, two on either side of the hall. The classrooms are in fair to good condition. The floors are made of tile and the walls are cinder block.

The interior of the rear addition contains the gymnasium, stage, and connecting hyphen to the original section of the school. The gymnasium has a wood floor with warping in some sections. The walls are concrete block. The ceiling has exposed beams and steel trusses. The basketball goals remain, as well as the center floor logo of "MPCEC." The wood floor of the stage has been removed and is in a state of disrepair. The ceiling of the stage area also has exposed wood beams and steel trusses. The roof and ceiling show significant damage, with some timbers missing, exposing the gym to the elements. The basement level of the stage once housed the dressing rooms prior to the addition of new dressing room on the south end of the stage in the late 1960s.

The interior of the southeast projecting wing contains nine classrooms, two restrooms, a secretary's office, a lobby, a cafeteria, stage and kitchen. The classrooms have linoleum floors, concrete block walls, and original ceiling tiles. As the newest section of the building, this addition has the least amount of damage. The lobby area is located at the entrance between the south wing and the southeast projection. The lobby has linoleum floors and concrete block walls. The lobby retains its original lighting as well, with six hanging globe lights attached to the ceiling. On the rear wall of the lobby at the entrance to the cafeteria is a mural that depicts a buffalo with the initials "G C T S P C" at the top. The cafeteria has linoleum floors, concrete block walls, and a dropped ceiling. The stage has a wood stage floor, which may have been tile at one point. The kitchen has linoleum floors, concrete block walls, and two stainless steel sink. There are also stainless steel steam tables, ranges, ovens, refrigerators and freezers.

2. Covered Pavilion (c. 1974, noncontributing structure)

A covered pavilion was added to the site in 1974. It is an open-air structure with a metal roof and poured concrete floors. The roof is supported by six wood beams and trusses. The pavilion is located northwest of the GCTS on the site.

3. Basketball Court (c. 1964, noncontributing structure)

The basketball court was added to the site in 1964. It is a poured concrete court with four metal basketball goals, one of each side of the court. It is well maintained and located northeast of the GCTS.

4. Playgrounds (c. 1994, 2004, two noncontributing structures)

Two playgrounds are located at this site. A playground, consisting of modern playground equipment, is located southeast of school. It was added to the site in 2004. A second playground is located south of the school and consists of older playground equipment. It was added to the site in 1994.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gibson County Training School in Milan is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of African American ethnic heritage as it relates to education and social history. The initial section of the school was constructed as a Rosenwald Fund project in 1926; for the next sixty years, the building grew in size and educational programming, a reflection not only of Milan's growth as a federal military base during World War II and the Cold War but also the long road to school desegregation that took place in Gibson County during those same years. The nominated property is a powerful physical document of not only Milan's history of education and of the local Civil Rights Movement but also of the impact of outside institutions on a rural West Tennessee town, ranging from Progressive-Era philanthropic foundations to the federal government's Milan Arsenal. The period of significance extends to 1963, when ownership changed from Gibson County to City of Milan. The building has undergone some changes but it retains its historic integrity for the period of significance to 1963.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before the construction of the GCTS, African American residents of Milan and Gibson County, like most black Tennesseans, had only limited access to public education. The Milan Colored School began offering classes for grades one through six in 1874; by 1897 the school had added grades seven and eight. Housed in a frame building located on West Front Street near the Cloverdale Cemetery, this school brought black families to Milan in search of educational opportunities for their children. Former GCTS teacher, Rachel Springer Bell, recalled "that her mother came to Milan, looking for better schools, when she was very young."¹ However, there was no secondary education available to African American youth in Gibson County. The nearest schools were Merry High School in Jackson, Madison County, or Manassas High School in Memphis, Shelby County.

The campaign for a public high school for African Americans, as well as a new school building serving all grade levels, began in the spring of 1924. Ollie H. Bernard, who held the position of State Agent for Negro Schools in the Tennessee Department of Education, reported in May that "the Milan school authorities are planning to erect a modern four or five-teacher school building for the colored people of the town and community" and "promised the authorities to cooperate with them when they are ready to begin their building. It will probably not materialize until 1924-25."² The first step was to gain county training school status for the Milan Colored School, which was under the City of Milan's jurisdiction but which would require county support for the secondary-level program. "County Training School" was the name given to public secondary schools for African Americans approved for assistance by the John F. Slater Fund, one of several northern philanthropic foundations that promoted black public education in the early twentieth

¹ "Milan's First Colored School: Polk-Clark's History Goes Back to 1874," "Polk-Clark Timeline," [1996], "Black Milan—Through the Years: Part III Education 1897-," *Milan Mirror-Exchange* [April 1986]; "Retired Milan Teacher 'Still Going Very Strong,'" *Milan Mirror-Exchange* [1986?] from newspaper clippings in the GCTS Polk-Clark Alumni Association Files, Polk-Clark Enrichment Center, Milan, TN (hereafter GPCAA Files).

² Report of O.H. Bernard, State Rural School Agent for Tennessee, for week ending May 17th, 1924, Tennessee Department of Education Records, RG 92, box 208, folder 10, reel 69, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN (hereafter TDE). Bernard also inquired about and obtained preliminary approval for the proposed building's eligibility for a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, probably because the school would be located in a city and at that time the fund only supported rural schools.

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century. Originally intended to emphasize "industrial" or vocational training and prepare teachers for rural black elementary schools, county training schools often had only two years of secondary work. The Slater Fund provided funds to supplement teacher salaries and purchase vocational equipment. The General Education Board, a philanthropic foundation created by John D. Rockefeller, appropriated grants for equipment as well.

O. H. Bernard secured the Slater Fund's approval for county training school status in 1925 and continued discussions with local school officials about a new building. Although the school site and building would belong to Gibson County, the City of Milan School Board would operate the school. Gibson County would then allot a share of its high school funds to the City of Milan to support the secondary-level programs at the county training school.³ Those plans came to an abrupt halt when the Milan Colored School burned in the fall of 1925.⁴

Neither black citizens of Milan nor Bernard gave up, however. Teachers and students moved into the first floor of the Masonic lodge hall while plans were laid for a new school building. George W. Adams Sr., an area farmer and store owner in Milan, organized African American community members to convince another landowner, Tom Coleman, to sell the acreage for a new school.⁵ This was the ten-acre property on Harris Street that O.H. Bernard described as "one of the most satisfactory locations I have found for some time." Bernard declared Milan to be "a progressive little town" and "the logical one for a training school" location. In April of 1926, Bernard reported that his "most profitable visit" for the month had been to Gibson County, where "the building committee had just closed a contract for a new, thoroughly modern six-teacher brick school for the colored people." By August, Gibson County had committed funding for the building, making it eligible for state construction aid and a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which offered matching grants as incentives for construction of modern facilities for black public schools in the South. The Rosenwald Fund's records tallied the total cost of the building as \$20,000, with \$1,500 in assistance from the fund and \$2,500 contributed by African American citizens.⁶ "Nowhere in the State have I had better cooperation and a more sympathetic attitude toward negro work than in this county," Bernard claimed, "and further there is not a place in the State where a school of this nature is more needed." Furthermore, the

³ This division of responsibilities led to some sparring over whether the distribution of high school funds between the county and city was fair. The arrangement continued until the City of Milan School Board leased the property in 1952 and the Gibson County School Board transferred the property to the city board in 1963, as discussed later. Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 12 May 1931, GPCAA Files.

⁴ "Black Milan—Through the Years: Part III Education 1897-;" Steve Short, "Tribute Paid to Town's First School," unidentified clipping; David White, "Black History Month: Polk-Clark School, Rich in Heritage," *Milan Exchange*, 24 February 1993; Dorothy Davis, "History of Polk Clark School," all in GPCAA Files; Report of O.H. Bernard, State Rural School Agent for Tennessee, November 1925, TDE, RG 92, box 14, folder 1, reel 5.

⁵ Adams's store was located near the new school property and "quite popular" with students buying snacks on school days. "Black Milan—The Early Years," *Milan Mirror-Exchange*, 19 February 1986, GPCAA Files.

⁶ Gibson County Training School index card, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, Rosenwald Database, <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search>; O.H. Bernard to P.L. Harned, 23 August 1926, and Secretary to Commissioner to S.L. Smith, 30 August 1926, both in TDE RG 92, box 13, folder 19, reel 5. Although listed in the Rosenwald Fund and state education department records as a six-teacher building, the school followed the Rosenwald Community School Plan 50 for a five-teacher school.

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faculty was “all well trained for their respective duties, each holding a State license backed up by normal and college training.”⁷

The new school building was comprised of four classrooms, an office, an industrial room, and an auditorium. Dignitaries attending the dedication ceremony included O.H. Bernard and four (white) members of the city school board as well as Gibson County School Superintendent F.L. Browning. The presence of Samuel L. Smith, director of the Rosenwald Fund’s school building program, further demonstrated the importance of the GCTS to county, state, and regional campaigns of progressive reform in black education (see Figures 2 and 3 for historic photographs of original Rosenwald GCTS).⁸

Education—Early History of the School

The opening of the GCTS in September of 1926 marked a new era for African American education in Milan and throughout the county. The new school offered educational opportunities for grades one through ten. It also included fully-equipped rooms for manual training and home economics classes that were central to its status as a county training school. O.H. Bernard inspected the school in February 1927 to check on the \$600 worth of equipment that had been purchased for the two vocational programs and reported that “these two departments are well equipped for beginning work in the two respective lines.”⁹ Like most county training schools, GCTS quickly expanded its academic as well as vocational offerings to gain full high school status, adding the eleventh grade in the fall of 1927. That year principal F.M. Dickey began planning for a separate shop building for the vocational classes (no longer extant). When completed in the fall of 1929, Dudley Tanner, the Tennessee Department of Education’s Rural School Agent, described the GCTS shop as “one of the best in the State.”¹⁰ By that time, the GCTS had gained full high school status and in May 1930 GCTS graduated its first four-year high school class.

The transition to four-year high school had not been easy, even with county training school designation. As county and state school officials began discussions about creating a four-year high school for African Americans, and knowing that only one such school would be created in the county, black citizens in Milan, Trenton, and Humboldt competed against each other to be the site. In Milan, physician Dr. Silas W. Polk led the successful drive to demonstrate black community support and the approval of white authorities.¹¹

⁷ Reports of O.H. Bernard, State Rural Agent for Tennessee, November and December 1925, TDE RG 92, box 14, folder 1, reel 5, and Reports of O.H. Bernard, April and August 1926, TDE RG 92, box 13, folder 20, reel 5. At different times Bernard reported the school site to be twelve and ten acres; the Rosenwald Fund index card lists it as eight acres. He also reported a campaign for a teachers’ home in April 1926, as did Dudley Tanner in August 1929. The City of Milan School Board discussed a teachers’ home as well in 1930. Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 14 October 1930, GPCAA Files.

⁸ “Industrial Training School Opened Tuesday / New Building Is Complimented by Officials and Is a Modern Building,” *Milan Exchange*, 2 September 1926, GPCAA Files.

⁹ Report of O.H. Bernard, State Rural School Agent for Tennessee, February 1927, TDE RG92, box 13, folder 20, reel 5; O.H. Bernard to P.L. Harned, 23 May 1928, TDE RG 92, box 34, folder 23, reel 11.

¹⁰ Report of Dudley Tanner, State Rural School Agent for Tennessee, January 1929, October 1929, TDE RG 92, box 36, folder 2, reel 12.

¹¹ Dr. Polk, who trained at Tougaloo College and Meharry Medical School, held great stature among the Gibson County Training School staff and community for his campaign on their behalf. At Dr. Polk’s death in 1932, Principal Dickey and the faculty issued a commemorative set of resolutions and closed the school on the day of his funeral. “Obituary of Dr. S. W. Polk” and Gibson County Training School Resolutions, 14 March 1932, GPCAA Files.

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The county superintendent and board of education invited Dudley Tanner, who now served as the state department of education's Agent for Negro Schools, and the state's high school supervisor, W.A. Bass, to Gibson County in August 1929 for the final decision. "Taking everything into consideration," Tanner wrote, "we decided to name the County Training School at Milan as the four year high school. This choice seemed to give satisfaction to all concerned."¹² The GCTS Parent-Teacher Association demonstrated its satisfaction by raising funds and purchasing "100 folding chairs, a dining table, 6 dining room chairs, and 10 stools."¹³

When Mrs. Ruth M. Hayes Hartsfield arrived to teach the upper grades in the fall of 1929, she recalled, "the new had not worn off. There were four large classrooms with cloak rooms, two small rooms, a chapel, library and gym combined, and a basement for toilet facilities."¹⁴ Gibson County African Americans who wanted a high school education had to make the trek to Milan, like Erskine Carnes (class of 1930) who walked seven miles each way from Concord.¹⁵ Others paid 75 cents each week to ride a bus that collected students from other towns in Gibson County, including Dyer, Gibson, Fruitland, Humboldt, Kenton, Rutherford, and Trenton.¹⁶ The Julius Rosenwald Fund paid some of the transportation costs as well, and in 1931 granted \$500 for "purchase and operation" of a bus.¹⁷ The Rosenwald Fund had also provided matching grants for a school radio and library book collections for the elementary and secondary programs.¹⁸

The onset of the Great Depression did not affect the academic program at GCTS. When Dudley Tanner visited the school with a white member of the city board of education in early 1931, he reported that "as usual in this school, I was pleased by what I saw," and that "Milan Training School [is] one of the best in the state."¹⁹ But local rivalries continued to threaten the GCTS. In 1933, Theodore R. Hartsfield, who had become GCTS principal the year before, complained to assistant state high school inspector W.E. Turner that "Prof. Watson [principal of Trenton Rosenwald School] and [Gibson County] Supt. Koffman are doing everything they can to move [the high school] to Trenton. They even go so far as to give the children examinations and answer the questions for them."²⁰ Both W.E. Turner and Robert E. Clay, state Rosenwald building agent, made visits to Milan and other towns early in 1934 because of what Turner only described

¹² Report of Dudley Tanner, State Agent for Negro Schools of Tennessee, August 1929, TDE RG 92, box 36, folder 2, MF reel 12.

¹³ Report of Dudley Tanner, State Agent for Negro Schools of Tennessee, August 1929, October 1929, TDE RG 92, box 36, folder 2, MF reel 12.

¹⁴ "Recollections of Mrs. Ruth M. Hayes Hartsfield, Black History Program," February 1987, GCTS Polk-Clark Alumni Association Heritage Room, Polk-Clark Enrichment Center, Milan, TN; "Black Milan;" "Milan's First Colored School."

¹⁵ At first Hayes's salary came from \$5 monthly tuition and when students' families ran out of money, the school took out a bank loan. Short, "Tribute Paid."

¹⁶ "Milan's First Colored School: Polk-Clark's History Goes Back to 1874."

¹⁷ Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Negro Schools, "County Training Schools of Tennessee 1929-30;" receipt from Julius Rosenwald Fund, 5 February 1931; Assistant Commissioner to S.L. Smith, 7 February 1931, TDE RG 92, box 36, folder 1, reel 11.

¹⁸ Gibson County Training School index card; Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Negro Schools, "County Training Schools of Tennessee 1929-30;" correspondence between F.L. Browning and state officials, November 1928 to December 1930, TDE RG 92, Box 29, folder 7, reel 9.

¹⁹ Report of Dudley Tanner, State Agent for Negro Schools of Tennessee, January 1931, TDE RG 92, box 36, folder 2, reel 12.

²⁰ T.R. Hartsfield to W.E. Turner, 14 November 1933, TDE RG 92, box 60, folder 2, reel 20.

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as "certain difficulties" and "delicate community matters" that "had to do with the educational procedures."²¹ Despite these circumstances, Hartsfield hoped to build at least two new classrooms. One would be a science laboratory, reflecting the way that this county training school founded to promote vocational training was rapidly developing its academic program.²² In 1942, four classrooms were added to the building, two on either end of the original GCTS.

Social History: Impact of Federal Programs

Beginning in 1940, the federal government would play a major role in Milan's economy, creating demand for and supplying funding to expand the GCTS. New Deal programs were one source of federal funds that went into the school. Rosenwald building agent Robert E. Clay coordinated a National Youth Administration (NYA) project to build a new gymnasium with local school officials and citizens. Milan school patrons raised \$300 as their allotted contribution to the project.²³ At that time, ten of the high school's ninety-five students had NYA jobs, with girls assigned to assist in the library and home economics classes and boys employed to clean the building and work on the grounds.

The US Army also began operations in Milan in 1940. The Milan Arsenal, which occupies over 28,000 acres just outside the city, began as the Milan Army Ammunition Plant to supply British forces before the United States had entered the war and continued to supply US forces during and beyond the Second World War.²⁴ Newspaper articles in 1942 documented that the national government, through its Federal Works Agency, was "paying its way in utilization of Tennessee's educational facilities for children of workers in wartime industries" including between \$13,000 and \$14,500 for an addition to the GCTS.²⁵ As the major public facility for African Americans in the city, the GCTS also served as a wartime rationing registration center.²⁶

Social History: School Desegregation in Gibson County

Cold War tensions kept the federal presence in Milan and as a result, the federal government assisted the GCTS's facility needs in the 1950s. Congress regularly appropriated funding to school boards that had to educate large numbers of children of military or other "federally connected" personnel. In Milan, these funds allowed the city school board to take steps toward "equalization" of black and white public school facilities. These steps benefitted the GCTS but would never bring full parity with white public schools or stave off the legal challenges to segregation that culminated in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education US Supreme Court decision. The first of these changes was the construction of a new gymnasium in 1951. In the summer of 1952, the city school board authorized bidding for a curtain and cyclorama in the auditorium and

²¹ Monthly Report of W.E. Turner, Assistant State Agent for Negro Schools of Tennessee," February 1934, March 1934, TDE RG 92, box 59, folder 12, reel 20.

²² Ibid., T.R. Hartsfield responses to Division of Negro Schools circular letter, 13 March 1934, TDE RG 92, box 60, folder 2, reel 20.

²³ R.E. Clay to W.E. Turner, 26 August 1939, 25 September 1939, 7 October 1939, 3 February 1940, [June 1940], TDE RG 92, box 214, folder 16, reel 71.

²⁴ "Milan's Bullet Plant: Arsenal Locating in Milan Was No Accident," *Milan Mirror-Exchange*, 12 March 1986, GPCAA Files.

²⁵ "Contractors to Bid on School Annex," 22 January 1942; "Allotments by FWA for City School Additions and Maintenance Are Listed," *Milan Exchange*, 29 January 1942; "Milan Improvement Projects Progressing," *Milan Exchange*, 16 April 1942; "756 Students Enrolled in Milan City Schools," *Milan Exchange*, 24 September 1942, all in GPCAA Files.

²⁶ "Sugar Consumer to Register May 4-7," *Milan Exchange*, 16 April 1942, GPCAA Files.

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curtains for its windows, as well as two hundred folding chairs, another hundred student desks, and "sanding, sealing and lining of floors." Because federal grants available for "the construction, enlargement and equipment of the GCTS property" required that the City of Milan School Board control the GCTS property, the board leased the land from the Gibson County School board for twenty-five years beginning in November 1952. Two years later the city school board authorized a \$25,000 bond sale to fund new outbuildings for home economics, manual training, and a cafeteria at GCTS, followed by the purchase of tools for the new shop building and new science equipment. But in 1958, the city school board was still worried about the "needed construction at the Gibson County Training School," including "widening the halls ... and replacing wooden floors in the old section with concrete floors," a heating system, water fountains, and new "biology or science desks."²⁷ Even so, the Milan Chamber of Commerce president in 1961 recalled considerable development of the school plant since 1950, having added the gym in 1951, four additional classrooms c. 1953, and new wings to the east and south c. 1955 and c. 1958. The south wing housed the cafeteria and home economics department, the east added two more classrooms and the science department as well as a new office for the principal; an addition of two more classrooms was underway in the northern wing by 1961.²⁸

The 1960s brought even more changes. In 1961 the school received a new name: Polk-Clark School. The title honored Dr. Silas W. Polk, who had spearheaded the original campaign for a high school, and Mrs. Saletta (Sleetie) Crudup Clark, a beloved first grade teacher and Dean of Girls at GCTS from its opening in 1926 until her death in 1959. As pressures to desegregate public education mounted, the Gibson County School Board began selling off its rural African American schools and transferred ownership and full responsibility for Polk-Clark High School to the City of Milan's school board in 1963.²⁹ The Milan City School Board was already making more changes at Polk-Clark to equalize school facilities. The purchase of adjacent acreage, authorized in 1960 and finally completed two years later at a cost of \$10,000, led to the construction in 1964 of dressing rooms in the basement of the gym and a "lobby" for the gymnasium, the latter doubling as the band room, and plans for a new elementary school wing for 1967.³⁰

The proposed elementary wing at Polk-Clark School brought extra scrutiny of Milan's school system under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Milan City School Board had contracted with the Jackson architectural firm of Thomas, Ross, and Stanfill for the new wing, but when Ross went to the State Department of Education for approval, he was informed that "the State Department was holding up on the approval of the addition to any formerly all negro schools." Ross had arrived in Nashville just before Tennessee Commissioner of Education J.H. Warf informed the state's school superintendents in mid-July 1964 that they would lose

²⁷ Minutes of meeting, Mayor and Board of Alderman, City of Milan, February 1958, May 1958, August 1948, photocopies in GPCAA Files.

²⁸ "Chamber President Lauds Teachers, Administrators," *Milan Exchange*, 2 November 1961, GPCAA Files.

²⁹ Minutes of meeting, City of Milan Board of Education, 20 December 1963, photocopy in GPCAA Files.

³⁰ Minutes of meeting, Gibson County Board of Education, 12 March 1964; Minutes of meeting, Mayor and Alderman of City of Milan, 19 June 1962 and 10 March 1964; Milan Board of Education to Mayor and Board of Alderman, City of Milan, 5 July 1963, all photocopies in GPCAA Files. The 14 July 1964 letter indicates that the city school board funded the gymnasium area work from the \$49,000 it received for "federally connected children." A letter from the Milan Board of Education to the Mayor and Board of Alderman, City of Milan, dated 14 July 1964, indicated \$20,000 of the \$49,000 received for "federally connected children" went to pay on debts incurred for their construction program, including "a lobby to the gymnasium [sic] at Polk-Clark School to serve as band room during the school day and lobby for basketball games."

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federal funds if their systems were not in compliance with the Civil Rights Act and, moreover, that the state would not make up for any lost federal moneys.³¹ As the City of Milan School Board had only just begun work on desegregating schools, any funding for new classrooms at Polk-Clark School was in jeopardy.

Under the leadership of city superintendent Jimmy Thomas and GCTS principal T.R. Hartsfield, Milan had taken some small steps toward desegregation, such as the creation of a Bi-Racial Committee (which included both Thomas and Hartsfield) and implementation of a committee recommendation for the appointment of a black member of the city school board.³² Milan schools had instituted a "freedom of choice" program that allowed parents to choose where their children would attend school in the fall of 1964. Under this plan twenty-two black children had been registered for various formerly all-white schools, but no white children had been registered for formerly all-black schools like Polk-Clark School, and the school board had been notified by the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to submit a new integration plan. Superintendent Thomas used Polk-Clark's location and the proposed elementary wing to argue for the school's potential for successful desegregation and integration. He told the state commissioner, "We do not feel this addition promotes segregation. ... Polk Clark is located on the edge of what we call negro town. Adjacent to the campus is an all white street and to the rear is a new white subdivision. There is a definite need for a good school building in this part of Milan. Frankly, I feel a good building on this site will be an asset to integration in a few years and if and when we have to zone our schools."³³ In other words, a new elementary school addition might attract students from the adjacent white neighborhood, not only improving the effectiveness of the freedom of choice registration program but paving the way toward successful integration when new school zones were developed.

The City of Milan School Board pressed ahead with plans for an addition of eight classrooms, an office, a first aid room, and library for elementary grades as well as a new cafeteria at Polk-Clark. After signing an "Assurance of Compliance" with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which the Milan Exchange assured its readers meant continued "freedom of choice" registration, the city school district required each of its teachers to sign a declaration that she or he "shall do all in my power to see that a just, practical, and peaceful integration program will be accomplished."³⁴ Thomas received approval for his revised integration plan in July 1965, and in August state commissioner Warf approved construction of the elementary wing.³⁵ Those developments reopened the door for federal funding to Milan's schools as "a federally affected area" associated with the Arsenal as well as under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.³⁶

³¹ J.W. Thomas to J.H. Warf, 17 July 1964; J.H. Warf circular letter, 17 July 1964, photocopies in GPCAA Files.

³² Minutes of meeting, City of Milan Board of Education, 18 September 1963, 24 October 1963, photocopy in GPCAA Files.

³³ Thomas to Warf, 17 July 1964.

³⁴ Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 18 January 1965; "Notice," *Milan Exchange*, 25 February 1965; Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 22 March 1965; undated black form for teacher rehiring, all in GPCAA Files.

³⁵ Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 29 July 1965, 16 August 1965, photocopies in GPCAA Files; J.H. Warf to J.W. Thomas, 30 August 1965, TDE RG 92, box 100, folder 22, reel 34.

³⁶ Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 13 December 1965, photocopy in GPCAA Files. Although federal facilities and funding provided leverage for desegregation in other communities and certainly were a factor in prodding the Milan City School Board to action, local school authorities did not move any more quickly than necessary towards integration and would not fully integrate the city's schools until 1970.

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The elementary school wing was ready for final inspection in January 1967. But the process of integration that the elementary wing had precipitated was now threatening Polk-Clark High School. As was common during the years of desegregation and integration, black schools like Polk-Clark paid the highest price for change, losing programs, administrators and teachers, and eventually buildings. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, the city school board had begun planning for a single new high school building to replace the segregated Polk-Clark High School for African Americans and the Milan High School for whites. Respected African American science teacher Vernon Graves was assigned to teach the physics class at Milan High School. But the Tennessee Department of Education continued to pressure the Milan City School Board to speed up school integration, and suggested moving Polk-Clark's eleventh and twelfth grades to the formerly all-white Milan High School. The school board instead redoubled its efforts to secure enough transfers to justify the freedom of choice program. Still, the only students who applied for transfers were African American or the children of Mexican migrant workers. With no white citizens willing to send students to Polk-Clark other than the young children in the Head Start class, the only plan city superintendent Thomas thought would be acceptable to HEW was to "start phasing [out] our Polk-Clark High School" by switching its ninth grade to Milan High School in the fall of 1967.³⁷ In 1970, the last year that Polk-Clark graduated high school seniors, the only white children at Polk-Clark were in kindergarten. Polk-Clark now had six white teachers while the other city schools each had one black teacher.³⁸

After 1970, Polk-Clark operated as an integrated elementary school. It housed kindergarten through second grade until a new Milan Elementary School opened in the spring of 1996. By that time, the Gibson County Training School/Polk-Clark Alumni Association, which had been founded in 1974, had already worked with the Tennessee Historical Commission to dedicate a state historical marker at the school. The association was also developing plans and building support for converting the school into a community enrichment center.³⁹ The City of Milan first agreed to lease the property to the association for that purpose, but then moved to transfer ownership to the group. Although the City of Milan Board of Aldermen originally appropriated almost \$152,000 for renovations, the board later reduced that figure to \$50,000.⁴⁰ The Milan Polk-Clark Enrichment Center opened in August of 1996 and the Alumni Association retains ownership of the school property.

³⁷ Minutes of meeting, City of Milan School Board, 27 February 1967, 27 March 1967, 25 April 1967, photocopies in GPCAA Files. Milan's Head Start program was integrated from its creation in the summer of 1965. Polk-Clark also hosted a summer program for the children of migrant workers. "Migrant Program to End," *Milan Exchange*, 17 June 1970.

³⁸ "Superintendent Mayo Appears Before HEW Hearing Examiner," *Milan Exchange*, 28 January 1970.

³⁹ Alumni and community members had argued unsuccessfully for retention of a school at the site. "Alumni Still Fighting to Save Polk-Clark," *Jackson Sun*, 5 January 1994; "School May Become Recreation Hall," *Jackson Sun*, 5 October 1994; "City May Work with Alumni to Retain Old Building," *Milan Mirror-Exchange*, 11 October 1994, all in GPCAA Files.

⁴⁰ "City Denies Funds for Polk-Clark Center," *Milan Mirror-Exchange*, 17 June 1997; "Polk-Clark Enrichment Center: The Place for Community Involvement," GPCAA Files. In 2009, the City of Milan revised the deed to remove a requirement that the property revert to the city should the association not maintain its tax exempt status or conduct specific activities. "City Gives Polk Clark Alumni Ownership of Old School Property," *Milan Mirror-Exchange*, 18 August 2009, GPCAA Files

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for the nominated property are shown on the accompanying Gibson County, Tennessee, tax map as parcel number 140G B 001.0.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries contain all of the extant historical property associated with the GCTS during its period of significance.

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Gibson County Training School, Gibson County, Tennessee

Gibson County - Parcel: 140G B 001.00



207'

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Anne-Leslie Owens
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: December 2010

Gibson County Training School
Gibson County, Tennessee

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 of 45 | East Façade, photographer facing west |
| 2 of 45 | East Façade, photographer facing west |
| 3 of 45 | East Façade and South Elevation of c. 1955 wing, photographer facing northwest |
| 4 of 45 | East Façade and North Elevation of c. 1955 wing, photographer facing southwest |
| 5 of 45 | East Façade of North classroom wing, photographer facing west |
| 6 of 45 | North Elevation of North classroom wing, photographer facing south |
| 7 of 45 | East Elevation of South classroom wing and Elementary School Addition, photographer facing northwest |
| 8 of 45 | West Elevation of North classroom wing (Rosenwald School and c. 1942 classroom addition), photographer facing southeast |
| 9 of 45 | West Elevation of South classroom wing (Rosenwald School), photographer facing southeast |
| 10 of 45 | North Elevation of Rosenwald Auditorium, photographer facing south |
| 11 of 45 | South Elevation of Rosenwald Auditorium, photographer facing northeast |
| 12 of 45 | West Elevation of North classroom wing (c. 1953 and pre-1961 classroom additions), photographer facing southeast |
| 13 of 45 | West Elevation of South classroom wing (c. 1942 and c. 1958 classroom additions), photographer facing east |
| 14 of 45 | South Elevation of Hyphen between Rosenwald Auditorium and Gymnasium, photographer facing north |

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| 15 of 45 | East Elevation of Gymnasium, photographer facing southwest |
| 16 of 45 | East Elevation of Building Trades Addition, photographer facing west |
| 17 of 45 | North Elevation of Gymnasium and Building Trades Addition, photographer facing south |
| 18 of 45 | North and West Elevations of Gymnasium and Building Trades Addition, photographer facing southeast |
| 19 of 45 | West and South Elevations of Gymnasium, Dressing Room Addition, and Lobby/Band Room, photographer facing northeast |
| 20 of 45 | East Entrance to Elementary School Addition, photographer facing west |
| 21 of 45 | East Elevation of Elementary School Addition, photographer facing south |
| 22 of 45 | South and West Elevations of Elementary School Addition, photographer facing north |
| 23 of 45 | West Elevation of Elementary School Addition, photographer facing east |
| 24 of 45 | South Elevation of Elementary School Addition cafeteria, photographer facing north |
| 25 of 45 | West Elevation of Elementary School Addition cafeteria, photographer facing east |
| 26 of 45 | North Elevation of Elementary School Addition cafeteria, photographer facing south |
| 27 of 45 | Interior, Rosenwald School Classroom, photographer facing northwest |
| 28 of 45 | Interior, Rosenwald Auditorium, photographer facing west |
| 29 of 45 | Interior, c. 1942 Classroom, photographer facing northeast |
| 30 of 45 | Interior, c. 1953 Classroom, photographer facing southwest |
| 31 of 45 | Interior, c. 1955 Classroom, photographer facing east |
| 32 of 45 | Interior, c. 1958 Classroom, photographer facing southeast |
| 33 of 45 | Interior, pre-1961 Classroom, photographer facing northeast |
| 34 of 45 | Interior, North Classroom Wing Hallway, photographer facing north |
| 35 of 45 | Interior, Gymnasium, photographer facing northwest |

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36 of 45	Interior, Gymnasium, photographer facing northeast
37 of 45	Interior, Elementary School Addition Lobby, photographer facing northeast
38 of 45	Interior, Elementary School Addition Lobby, photographer facing west
39 of 45	Interior, Elementary School Addition Cafeteria, photographer facing northwest
40 of 45	Interior, Elementary School Addition Hallway, photographer facing southeast
41 of 45	Interior, Elementary School Addition Classroom, photographer facing southeast
42 of 45	Covered Pavilion, photographer facing southwest
43 of 45	Basketball Courts, photographer facing northeast
44 of 45	c. 1994 Playground, photographer facing northeast
45 of 45	c. 2004 playground, photographer facing northeast

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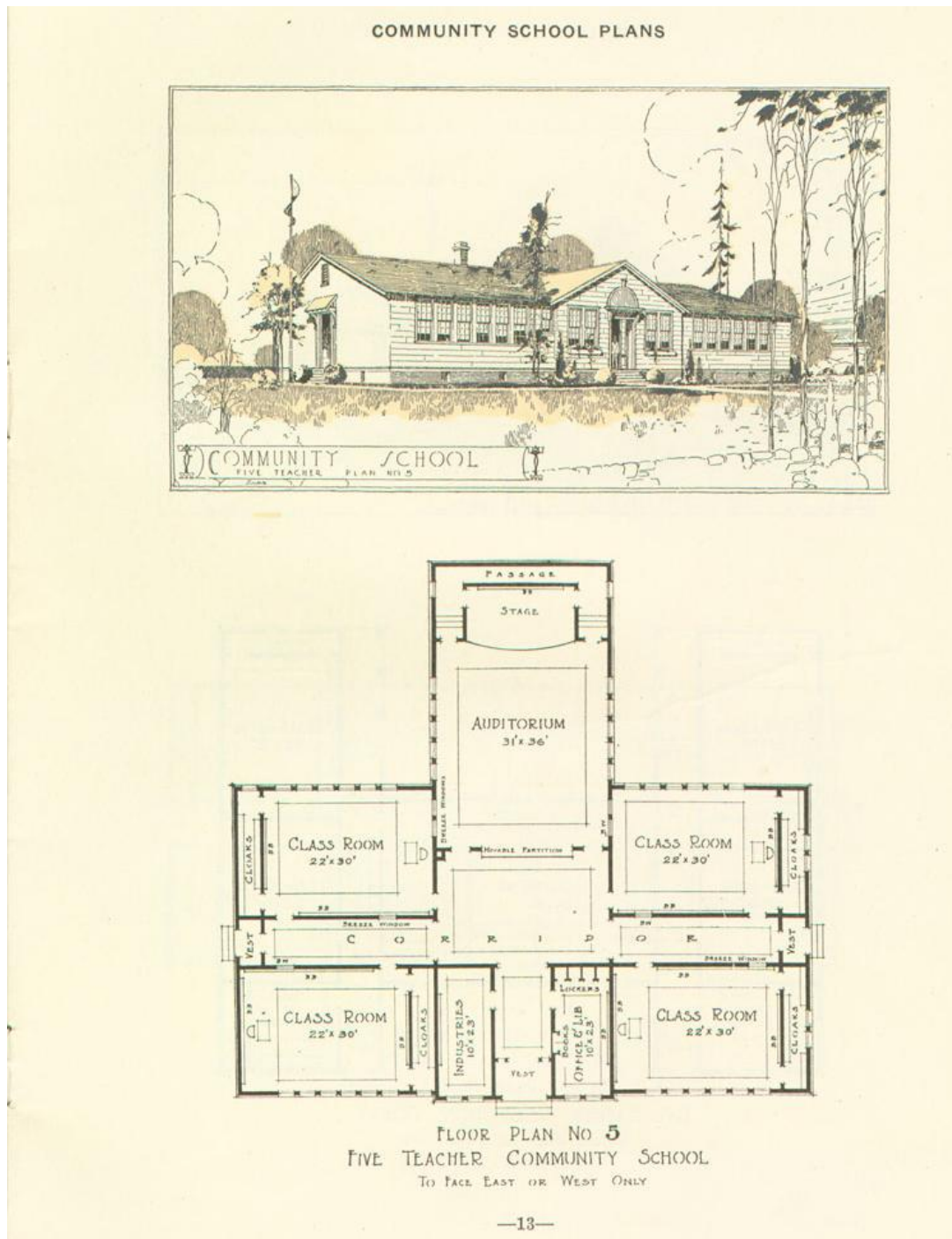


Figure 1. Five Teacher Community School: To Face East or West Only. From History South Rosenwald School Plans Website: http://historysouth.org/_schools/fiveteachew.html.

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Figure 2. Image of façade of original Gibson County Training School, c. 1928. From Fisk University
Rosenwald Fund Card File Database:
http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mzg4NQ==&school_county=Gibson&school_state=TN&button=Search&o=0.



Figure 3. Image of rear of original Gibson County Training School, c. 1928. From Fisk University
Rosenwald Fund Card File Database:
http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mzg4NQ==&school_county=Gibson&school_state=TN&button=Search&o=0.